

Remarks:

Claims 1, 3-5, and 7-8 remain in this case and all claims stand rejected.

The present invention comprises an articulated slip for a slip ram including a plurality of articulated elements attached to vertical pins or axles which are parallel to the axis of the tubular, for rotatable movement. The articulated elements are concave for abutting contact with a tubular through the slip ram. The pins are mounted to a slip ram, which comprises a piston within a cylinder, in the conventional manner for a blowout preventer (BOP) ram. When the slip ram is actuated, the ram moves forward, wrapping the articulated elements around the tubular in a gripping motion, much like the fingers of a human hand.

In the subject Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-8 as obvious over Watts in view of Avakov. Watts teaches a variable bore ram packer molded of an elastomeric material having a central semi-circular opening sized to fit closely about a tubular member. This is just the sort of packer that the present invention is intended to correct, in that the elastomeric material is squeezed down onto a tubular within the ram. Eventually, the elastomeric material may abrade, break off, and fall down hole. The packer member includes a plurality of pillar inserts molded within the elastomeric material around the central semi-circular opening. The packer member and the plurality of pillar inserts are molded into a unitary structure allowing the plurality of pillar inserts to move and seat against different diameter tubular members to prevent extrusion of the elastomeric material between the pillar inserts and the tubular member.

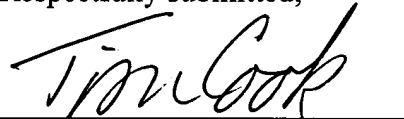
In contrast, the present invention includes a plurality of linked segments coupled to the arms, wherein each of the linked segments defines an arcuate interior surface for abutting contact with the outside surface of the tubular. Note that there is no elastomeric material molded around the pillar inserts to ultimately fail, but it is the segments themselves which contact the tubular. Watts does not teach the arcuate interior surface on linked segments for abutting contact with a tubular.

The Examiner then cited Avakov for the teaching of “two pins to flexibly connect the two segments so that they may articular (Column 7, lines 21-25). The Applicant respectfully asserts that the Examiner has misunderstood the teaching of Avakov. Refer particularly to FIG. 13. This shows a gripper block formed with a V-groove with planar surfaces which are tilted relative to one another. The gripper block is mounted for movement on a pin hole 156, *which is perpendicular* to the axis of a tubular within the gripper. Thus, the pins *are not vertical*, but horizontal, and the gripper cannot function as shown and described in the present disclosure. The gripper block can only rotate about a horizontal axis. There is simply no way to combine the structure with Watts with the gripper block of Avakov to produce a functional slip.

The Applicant asserts that all claims are now in condition for allowance and respectfully request early allowance. If the Examiner believes that a phone conference would expedite this case to issue, he is encouraged to contact the undersigned.

No additional fee is required.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Cook", written over a horizontal line.

Tim Cook  
Attorney for Applicant  
Registration No. 32,561

Law Office of Tim Cook P.C.  
P.O. Box 10107  
Liberty, Texas 77575  
(936) 336-8200  
(936) 336-8203 (fax)  
[timcook@libertypatent.com](mailto:timcook@libertypatent.com)